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JAMES J. GEDDIS, STAFF DIRECTOR

*Air America*  
*Sen. Anderson*  
**United States Senate**

COMMITTEE ON  
AERONAUTICAL AND SPACE SCIENCES

March 6, 1972

10013 New Federal Building  
and U. S. Courthouse  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Mr. H. L. Grundy  
President, Air America, Inc.  
103 Chung Shang Road, N.  
Taipei, Taiwan

Dear Mr. Grundy:

I have received reports of the efforts made by you and your staff to rescue Captain Roy F. Townley and the other crew members who were lost on a recent flight over Laos. On behalf of Captain Townley's family and friends, I thank all of you for those efforts, not only to locate and rescue Roy, but also in assisting Mrs. Townley, my friend for many years.

I wish at this time to express appreciation for the heroic work of Captain Rhyne. I offer him my own sympathy and sincerely hope that your company policies provide some small measure of compensation for his injury.

I would also like to pass my thanks on to Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Baird for their efficiency and courtesy in the interest they displayed towards the family. These two members of your staff proved themselves to be persons of noteworthy professional dedication.

Here at home, Mr. Peterson of your Washington office was most courteous and helpful in relaying information from overseas and, I understand, went beyond his obligations in accepting, at company expense, inquiries from local members of the family.

Mr. H. L. Grundy

COPY

March 6, 1972

This letter is addressed primarily to you because I am deeply impressed by the laudable team spirit which you have developed in your organization. Such evidence of high morale and camaraderie must not pass unnoticed. I am enclosing copies of this letter for individuals who have been mentioned by name. Our gratitude, however, extends to all who assisted in that critical period.

Sincerely yours,

Clinton P. Anderson

CPA:gmp

2 Encl.: Copy of letter to Captain and Mrs. Chowning  
Copy of letter to Captain and Mrs. Lopes

cc: Mr. J. A. Cunningham  
Captain James H. Rhyno  
Mr. John E. Baird  
Mr. Mark L. Peterson

CABLE SECRETARY PERSON/UNIT NOTIFIED

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DIRECTOR INFO VIENTIANE,

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ADMIN

REF: A. VIENTIANE 51103 (NOT COPIED DIRECTOR)

B. VIENTIANE 52714 (NOT COPIED DIRECTOR)

C. DIRECTOR 219435

1. AS FOLLOW UP TO REFERENCES A. AND C.,

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INQUIRES IN REFERENCE B. WHAT RESULTS, POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE,  
WERE ACHIEVED DURING WHITE HOUSE PARTY'S VISIT TO CHINA.

WE FEEL AN OBVIOUS MORAL OBLIGATION TO INFORM DEPENDENTS OF  
ANY NEWS, GOOD, BAD OR INCONCLUSIVE, PARTICULARLY SINCE THEY  
WITHHELD OTHER ACTION AT COMPANY SUGGESTION IN FAVOR  
OF INQUIRIES THROUGH THE PRESIDENTIAL VISIT.

2. VIENTIANE FURTHER ADVISES THAT MRS. TOWNLEY, NOW WORKING  
AS ☐ WIFE'S PRIVATE SECRETARY, PLANS TO VISIT CONUS  
FOR SEVERAL WEEKS, DEPARTING VIENTIANE 12 MARCH. SHE PLANS TO  
VISIT ☐ HOME OFFICE FOR DISCUSSIONS REGARDING MISSING  
BENEFITS AND WHEN DEATH BENEFITS CAN BE PAID UNDER EXISTING  
COMPANY LIFE INSURANCE POLICY.

3. WITH LIMITED RESEARCH FACILITIES HERE,

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PAGE 2 [ ] SECRET

[ ] IS NOT IN A POSITION TO ADVISE ON THE LAWS OF THE SEVERAL STATES REGARDING ESTABLISHMENT OF DEATH. THE CASE DOES NOT FALL UNDER THE GENERAL ENOCH ARDEN RULE, SINCE THE DISAPPEARANCE IS NOT WHOLLY UNEXPLAINED. WE BELIEVE THE GENERAL RULE IS THAT THE FACT OF DEATH IS AN ISSUE OF FACT, DEPENDENT UPON ALL THE SURROUNDING CIRCUMSTANCES.

4. WHILE [ ] MIGHT ARRANGE AN INDEMNIFICATION AGREEMENT WITH AILIFE, AS IN THE SCHWARTZ AND SNODDY CASES, IT SHOULD BE BORNE IN MIND THAT THE MISSING BENEFITS, COMPRISING 70 PERCENT OF THE EMPLOYEE'S PAY, HAD NO PARALLEL IN THOSE CASES. IT WOULD SEEM THAT WITH NO PERSONAL EXPENSES OF THE EMPLOYEE TO MEET, THE DEPENDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO MANAGE AS WELL FINANCIALLY ON THOSE BENEFITS AS THEY DID PRIOR TO HIS DISAPPEARANCE.

ON RELATED QUESTION WE INQUIRE WHETHER ANY ACTION HAS BEEN TAKEN BY [ ] WASHINGTON TOWARD ASSUMPTION OF THE MISSING BENEFITS BY BEC.

5. FULL TEXT OF REFS A AND B BEING SENT TO DIRECTOR. GP-1.

SECRET